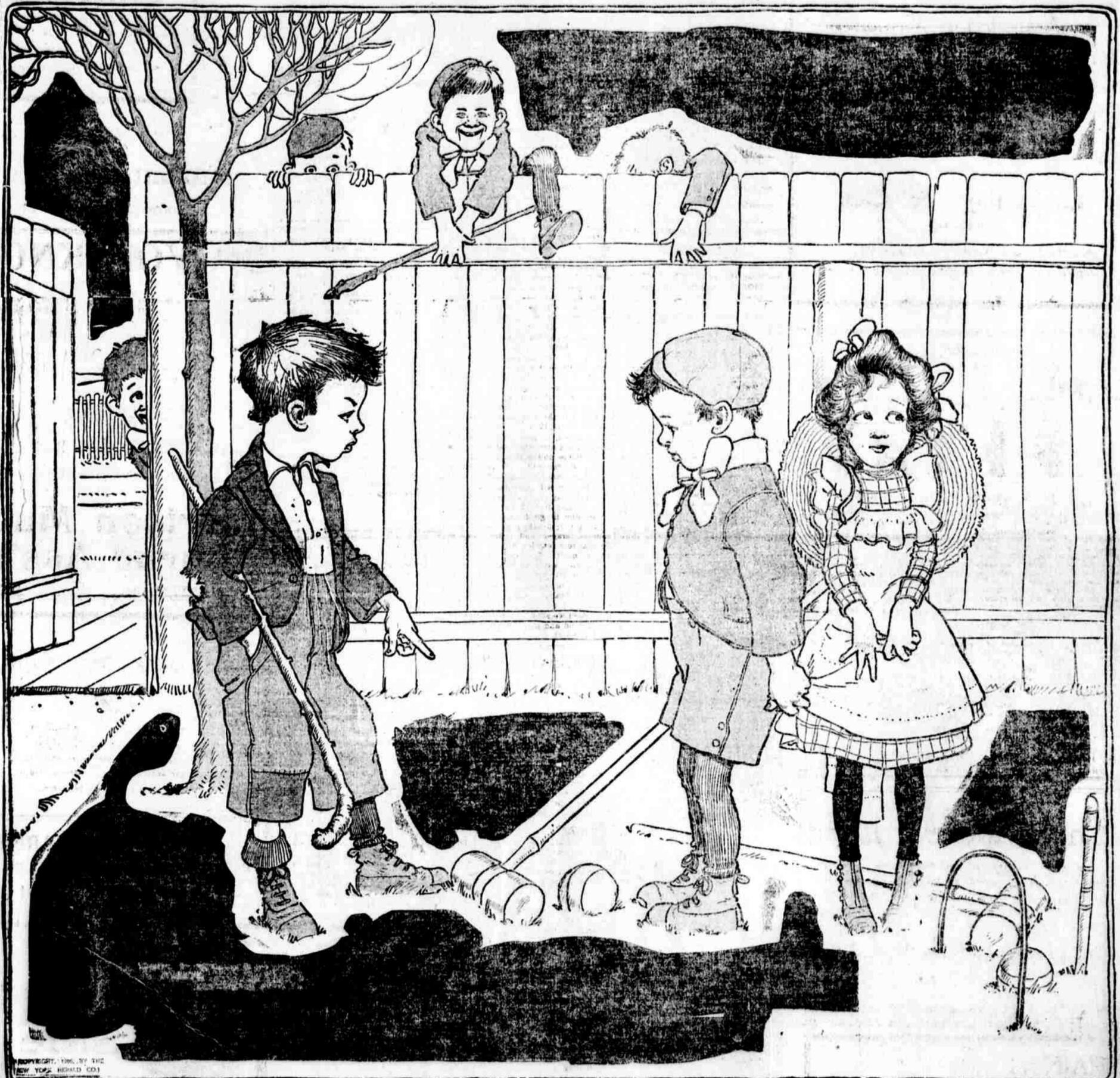




"HAM" BURR'S FUN.

Told by "Chimmie Fadden"--Edward W. Townsend. Illustrated by B. Cory Kilvert.



"WORSE THAN THAT, HE'D TATTLED TO THE GANG."

WHEN your very best friend goes away then there doesn't seem to be much use of anything, and even if your next best friend has left you his hammerless shotgun to use the world seems like a theatre after the curtain is down and the orchestra men are scuttling out through the little door under the footlights—and how I wonder where that little door leads to!

Mary is my best friend, though Pussay Wentworth says she is; but Mary doesn't need apples to keep her steady, while Pussay isn't always jolly even on apples, and makes side remarks about candy and silly stuff like that, which is an awful bore when a fellow is short of funds.

But Eggy is all right, and we have loads of fun out at the farm hunting squirrels and woodcock larks almost as much fun as if we ever shot any. The best part of gaming is the hunting, and the killing, especially when the air is cool and warm and hazy and bright all together, when the trees look like avenues of mist and the air between you and the hills is as purple as dewy water, and the smoke from the burning brush heap, where grandpa cleared last spring, goes curling away up to the sky in a blue haze that it looks almost white against the purple over by the hills.

Eggy snorts when I talk like that, and says he'll bet a million dollars that I'll be a big enough fool some time to write poetry. I didn't tell him, because he's such a snorter, but I am writing a poem to Pussay. It's awful hard work after you've used up love and dave, and blue and true, though I'm promising with yellow and mellow, and I know I'll make something rather good out of them as soon as I think of anything about Pussay. I can't get those words on to Eggy, which is all the queerer, because he says for the funniest fellow he knows. We were walking through the pasture on grandpa's one day, not saying much, but having a fit the time for he had grandpa's gun and I had Eggy's, and we were looking for larks, which always says as

first—when Eggy saw, him, as he does, "Mushrooms!" He pulled up something I'd call a toadstool and began to peel off the kid leathery top. Then he flicked off the sand underneath where it looked like a skirt dancer's skirt when she is not dancing, and then he ate it!

"Poison you, you silly," I said.

"None," said Eggy, looking for another. "They're good for warts, and they're good themselves."

"They have to be cooked in a chaffing dish with butter and cream," I said.

"What's a chaffing dish?" said Eggy.

"It's a silver pan with a jolly blue fire under it, that my father and mother mess up things in when the cook is cross, and don't give us a decent dinner."

Eggy grinned and said that that was another one of my city ways I tried to fool him with.

When we went to see the hired man, name called Grandpa, take out all the waves and stems and had apples and warts and things before he grinds his apples up for the press. He says that a champagne maker buys him such a fine kind, some powdered sugar over the doughnuts she gave to a big plateful and each of us a little glass of odd cider. My city, how good they were together!

My city, grandpa has a letter today of the size of a kid's appetite than have mothers, or even aunts. When grandpa left us and he finished our cider, he hadn't finished our doughnuts, and I said

and they hadn't come outshiny I had for the afternoon I should have wanted some one to play with me. I tried to get me to play shiny and said impulsive things about chaffing. Worse than that, he'd tattled to the gang, but they were hanging over the fence saying things about hard cider. So I told Eggy that I had promised Pussay to play croquet, and it was a gentleman's duty to keep his engagements. He could play shiny, not bother me, go on his way, and particularly not talk so loud. When he went away I saw Pussay give him a look I didn't understand then, but later—

Pretty soon I said to Pussay that I'd studied so hard for her sake—I had an awful headache and would lie down by the time a few minutes. Some time after word I woke up and there were Eggy and Pussay playing croquet as if they'd never come anything like all their lives. Then I knew what Eggy's nose and Pussay's book meant. To make it worse Pussay said to me—"Don't get up, Ham! You're heavy I like to play with a man who can stand his hard cider."

As if my headache was not enough, I had to endure the insults of a headless woman!